

Character Reference for Mahdi Hashi

To the Honourable John Gleeson, United States District Judge

My name is Thomas Martin Hayes and I am a qualified social worker within the local community. I have known Mahdi Hashi for approximately 15 years. We attended the same secondary school (High School) and although a few years younger than myself I found Mahdi very mature for his age which enabled us to build a close friendship. I am from an Irish Catholic background and regardless of our differences culturally, religiously or ethnically it never had an impact on our relationship. I feel that I know Mahdi very well; I attended family events such as his sister's wedding, and I still remember him that day and the suit and tie he wore. He stood the whole day honouring and greeting guests.

I was raised by a single mother who worked three jobs and I was an only child. My father not being around led me to have some difficulties throughout my teenage years. Through these difficult times I would turn to Mahdi for support and advice. I always found that his advice would uplift me and steer me in the right direction. His constructive and encouraging advice reflected his hard working and ambitious character as he often mentioned his desire to go on and study at University.

Throughout my years of knowing Mahdi I have never known him to be in any sort of trouble, inside or outside of school. He was the type of person that made you feel comfortable from the moment you met him. He was always smiling and willing to give you his time and a helping hand. True and honest friends are very rare to find and I am one of many who consider Mahdi to be a true and honest friend.

Within our local area there has been some history of the Somali youth being involved in crime and participating in gangs. Although never involved, Mahdi's good character was known and he was respected by everyone in the community including those youth. Mahdi played an active part in trying to encourage the youth to stay away from crime and violence. Many of those youth who are now young men have not forgotten Mahdi's efforts and the impact that he has had in their lives.

Mahdi's circumstance has been very difficult for the whole community. I personally have still not made sense of what and how this has happened. Although Mahdi has pleaded guilty to his conviction I find this crime completely out of character and it has not changed my opinion of him in any way.

I know that when Mahdi has made a mistake he is able to reflect upon where he has gone wrong. The Mahdi I know is a remorseful person and sincere in his apologies for the things that he has done wrong.

I hope that this letter has given you some insight to who Mahdi Hashi really is.

Yours truly,

Thomas Hayes